

PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS' SALARIES

Key Findings: England, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Scotland, United States

The United States paid the second highest average starting salary to public school teachers at both the primary and upper secondary levels with minimum training. Only Germany reported a higher average starting salary for teachers at these education levels with minimum training.

International comparisons of public school teachers' salaries can be used to examine how teacher compensation varies across countries. This indicator presents a cross-country comparison of the average salaries of teachers at two points in their careers: (1) starting salaries of full-time teachers with the minimum training necessary to be fully qualified at the beginning of their teaching careers and (2) average salaries of full-time teachers with the minimum training necessary to be fully qualified plus 15 years of experience. Comparisons are presented across two education levels: primary and upper secondary. The indicator also compares the ratio of these average salaries to the gross domestic product (GDP) per capita for each of the reporting countries; this ratio provides a proxy measure of teacher earnings relative to the earnings of the country's average paid employee.

Of the seven G-8 countries reporting data in 2004, the United States paid the second highest average starting salary to public school teachers at both the primary and upper secondary levels

with minimum training (roughly \$32,000) (figure 15). Only Germany reported a higher average starting salary for teachers at these two education levels with minimum training. In most G-8 countries in 2004, public school teachers at both education levels with minimum training earned less than the average GDP per capita in their respective countries (table 4). For example, in the United States, the GDP per capita was about \$39,700, and the average starting salary of public primary and upper secondary school teachers with minimum training was about 80 percent of the U.S. GDP per capita. In Germany, however, public primary and upper secondary school teachers with minimum training earned 131 and 147 percent, respectively, of the German GDP per capita.

The United States paid the third lowest average salary to public primary and upper secondary school teachers with minimum training plus 15 years of experience (about \$40,000) (figure 15). Compared to the United States, England, Scotland, Japan, and Germany reported higher average salaries for public primary and upper secondary school teachers with minimum training plus 15 years of experience. In all of the G-8 countries, public school teachers at both education levels with minimum training plus 15 years of experience earned at least as much as the average GDP per capita in their respective countries (table 4).

Definitions and Methodology

Teacher salary data are from the 2005 Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Indicators of National Education Systems (INES) Survey on Teachers and the Curriculum and are for school year 2003–04. Data for GDP per capita are for calendar year 2004. Dollar figures for teacher salaries and GDP per capita were converted to U.S. equivalent dollars using purchasing power parities (PPPs), which equalize the purchasing power of different currencies. PPP exchange rate data are from the 2003–04 OECD National Accounts Database (OECD 2006b). Using PPPs to convert all teacher salary data to U.S. equivalent dollars allows for cost of living differences across countries to be taken into account.

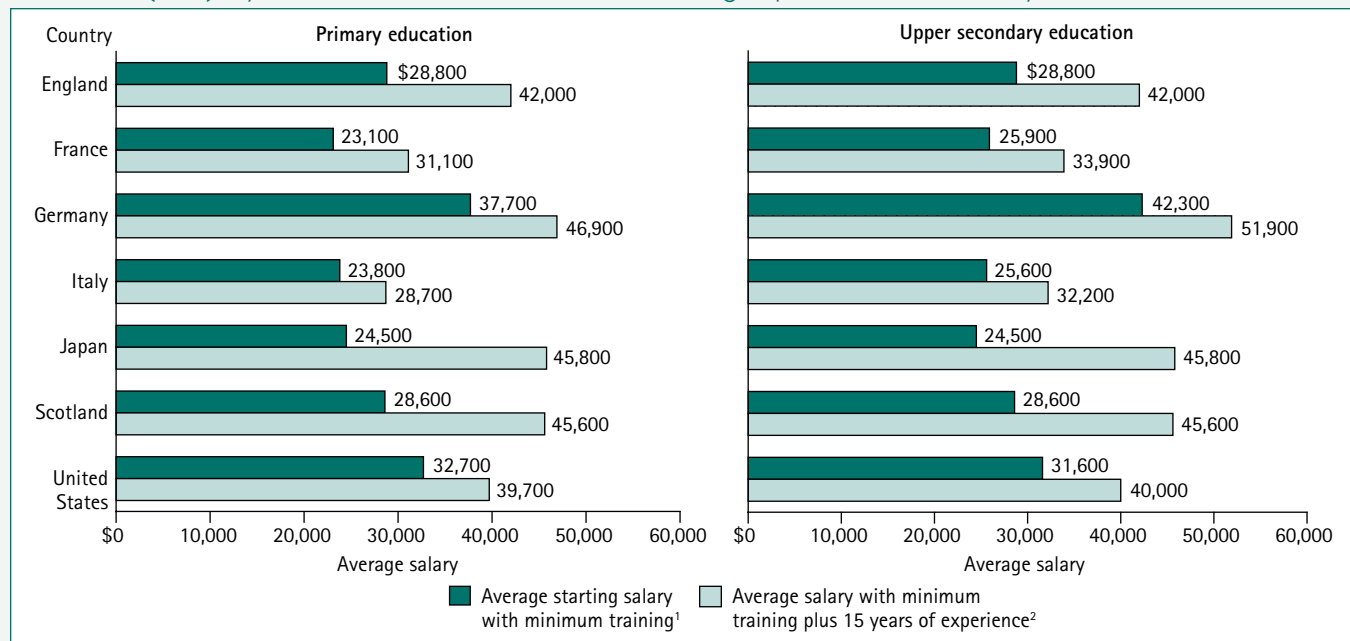
Salaries refer to scheduled salaries according to official pay scales, and are defined as before-tax, or gross, salaries (the total sum paid by the employer for the labor supplied), excluding the employer's contribution to social security and pension (according to existing salary scales).

Countries with centralized systems of education typically have national salary schedules. In countries like the United States, with decentralized education systems, local or regional governments establish their own salary schedules. The national averages shown here do not represent the within-country variation that exists in teacher salaries.

While this indicator compares public school teachers with the minimum training necessary to be fully qualified and those with the minimum training necessary to be fully qualified plus 15 years of experience, there may be considerable variation across countries in the percentage of teachers who meet these definitions. Furthermore, the minimum training necessary to be fully qualified varies by country. In the United States, teacher training is decentralized and varies by state.

As shown in the figure and table, education levels are defined according to the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED). For more information on the ISCED levels, see appendix A.

Figure 15. Public school teachers' average annual salaries in U.S. dollars converted using purchasing power parities (PPPs), by education level, level of teacher training/experience, and country: 2004



¹Refers to the average scheduled annual salary of a full-time teacher with the minimum training necessary to be fully qualified at the beginning of the teaching career.

²Refers to the average scheduled annual salary of a full-time teacher with the minimum training necessary to be fully qualified plus 15 years of experience.

NOTE: Education levels are defined according to the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED). Primary education refers to ISCED level 1. Upper secondary education refers to ISCED level 3. For more information on the ISCED levels, see appendix A in this report. Average salaries are gross salaries (i.e., before deductions for income taxes) for school year 2003–04 and are converted to U.S. dollars using 2003–04 national purchasing power parities (PPPs) exchange rate data.

SOURCE: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). (2006). *Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators 2006*, table D3.1. Paris: Author.

Table 4. Public school teachers' average annual salaries in U.S. dollars converted using purchasing power parities (PPPs) expressed as a ratio of gross domestic product (GDP) per capita in U.S. dollars, by education level, level of teacher training/experience, and country: 2004

Country	Average starting salary with minimum training ¹ expressed as a ratio of GDP per capita		Average salary with minimum training plus 15 years of experience ² expressed as a ratio of GDP per capita		GDP per capita
	Primary	Upper secondary	Primary	Upper secondary	
England ³	0.93	0.93	1.36	1.36	\$30,800
France	0.80	0.89	1.07	1.17	29,000
Germany	1.31	1.47	1.63	1.80	28,800
Italy	0.87	0.94	1.05	1.18	27,300
Japan	0.83	0.83	1.55	1.55	29,600
Scotland ³	0.93	0.93	1.48	1.48	30,800
United States	0.82	0.79	1.00	1.01	39,700

¹Refers to the average scheduled annual salary of a full-time teacher with the minimum training necessary to be fully qualified at the beginning of the teaching career.

²Refers to the average scheduled annual salary of a full-time teacher with the minimum training necessary to be fully qualified plus 15 years of experience.

³Data on GDP per capita refer to the United Kingdom.

NOTE: Education levels are defined according to the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED). Primary education refers to ISCED level 1. Upper secondary education refers to ISCED level 3. For more information on the ISCED levels, see appendix A in this report. Average salaries are gross salaries (i.e., before deductions for income taxes) for school year 2003–04 and are converted to U.S. dollars using 2003–04 national purchasing power parities (PPPs) exchange rate data. GDP per capita in national currencies (2004) has been calculated from total population and total GDP, and has been converted to US dollars using PPPs for GDP.

SOURCE: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). (2006). *Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators 2006*, table D3.1 and web table X2.6b. Paris: Author. Retrieved November 1, 2006, from <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/45/55/37370984.xls>.